Mildred "Erna" Insley Schanz

May 10, 1933 ~ October 24, 2025 (age 92)

Provided by Claytor Rollins Funeral Home and Crematory

Mildred “Erna” Insley Schanz, a loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and cherished friend, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on October 24, 2025. Born in Newport News, Virginia, on May 10, 1933, Mildred lived a life filled with compassion, laughter, and steadfast devotion to her family, friends, church, and community.

She was predeceased by her mother, Erna Schmidt Curfman; her husband, Robert W. Insley; her husband, Dewey Schanz; her sister, Patricia Staples; and several aunts and uncles. She is survived by her children, Robin Adele Insley (Dare) and Robert Wilbur Insley II (Jennifer); her adopted daughter, Donna Phillips; her grandchildren, Robert W. Insley III (Meggie) and Ann Marie Insley (Zach); and her adored great-grandchildren, Roran, Olivia, and Zoey; and numerous cousins.

After graduating from high school, Mildred briefly attended the John Robert Powers School of Modeling in New York City before returning home to work in payroll at the Newport News Shipyard. She later became a beloved secretary at Poquoson High School, where she was known for her dedication, efficiency, and warmth. Her contributions were honored when she became the 12th recipient of the Order of the Bullpen, a distinction awarded to those whose spirit and service left a lasting mark on the school community.

Mildred was a faithful member of Tabernacle United Methodist Church for more than sixty years. Her service included Council on Ministries, Vacation Bible School, church office volunteer and was a long time member of the choir. Mildred lived her faith through service, hospitality, and kindness. Whenever a church family lost a loved one, she was among the first to deliver her signature dishes—dozens of deviled eggs and her famous pineapple upside-down cake—comforting others with both her food and her heart.

After moving to Yorktown, Mildred helped establish the Rainbrook Villas Homeowners Association, serving as president and on its Board of Directors for many years. Her leadership, creativity, and enthusiasm brought neighbors together, and in 2004 she was recognized as a Lifestyle Ambassador by Epmark.

For sixteen years, she also served her community as Precinct Assistant Chief at the election polls in Yorktown, taking pride in helping ensure every voice was heard.

In 2017, Mildred moved to the Richmond area where she spent her last eight years. She lived at Imperial Plaza and later moved to her final home at 5100 Monument Condominiums in Henrico County.

Mildred was known for her generous spirit, quick wit, and infectious smile. If a friend was in need, she was there—no questions asked. Her best friend of more than sixty years, Joan Passanisi, shared countless adventures with her, from bingo nights, trips to Lake Anna and neighborhood gatherings. Wherever the two of them were, laughter followed—and sometimes a little mischief, too.

Always the life of the party, Mildred not only planned celebrations—she made them memorable with her charm, laughter, and sparkle. She also loved her sweet wines and a good beer, and she was a devoted Washington Redskins fan through and through. At home games, she could be found at the front of the crowd, clapping along as the band marched by and high fiving the Indian Chief. When she couldn't be there in person, she hosted watch parties filled with cheer—especially when her team faced off against their longtime rivals, the Cowboys.

Her legacy is one of love, laughter, loyalty, and light. Mildred's joyful spirit, open heart, and unwavering kindness touched all who knew her. She will be deeply missed but forever remembered for the way she made everyone feel like family.

Special thanks to the staff at 5100 Monument Condominiums, her devoted neighbor, Jennifer Martin, At Home Care and Affinity Hospice Care of Virginia, for their kindness and support.

Visitation will be held on Friday, October 31st, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Claytor Rollins Funeral Home in Poquoson, VA. A funeral service will follow on Saturday, November 1, at 11:00 a.m. at Tabernacle United Methodist Church in Poquoson.

Arrangements and heartfelt guidance through Claytor Rollins Funeral Home.

Online condolences to claytorrollins.com.